

Handouts

Robert Coles. Coles supplies another form of information about distinction and habitus. Along with others in the field of education, he's discussed the differences in kind of educational experience that people have. Education for the economic bottom of society tends to be oriented around specific limited knowledges, learning rules, and how to stay in place. Education for the economically privileged tends to teach "how the world works." And by implication how one can use the world; the individual is assumed to have considerable agency. People in the middle ranks tend to learn what the system is and how to work within it successfully, to "fit in".

We'll actually get to see a working out of this in the next season of *The Apprentice* which is deliberately starting out with "book smart" MBAs vs. "street smart" scrappy folks with hands on experience.

To apply this to higher education today, we could contrast the kind of media education an undergrad gets at Columbia College (Chicago) which tends to be technically heavy and historically and theoretically spare. The plus of a Columbia College education is that you learn from a (largely adjunct) faculty who are working professionals. They tend to teach "this is how it is done in the working world" so you are in fact very capable of getting an entry level job, joining the union, fitting into the group process, etc.

At the School of the Art Institute (where the tuition is actually close to Northwestern's--part of a long evolution upward), the approach is a conservatory immersion in the art world with an emphasis on self-expression rather than technical prowess. (Some students do learn to be skilled in process, but often from their own dedication to it.) The goal is to become An Artist rather than fill an existing occupational niche. Similarly, the internal ranking system at SAIC is that the least employable fields of painting and sculpture are the most privileged, while the most likely majors to get a job on graduation in areas such as graphic design and clothing design are the least privileged (and carry connotations of being feminine, as opposed to the heroic masculinity of welding a huge piece of sculpture, etc.) The dominant expectation in the Filmmaking department at SAIC in the past has been to become a film artist, particularly an Experimental Filmmaker (the late Stan Brakhage, the pre-eminent US experimental filmmaker, taught there for many years). Of course there are very few patrons or employers for experimental filmmakers.

In documentary, an equivalent would be Michael Moore, who actually works with a whole lot of people, but who is featured as the heroic loner (*Roger and Me*). A more upscale example might be Bill Moyers on PBS.